This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings of claims in the instant application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Cancelled) - Please Cancel Claim 1, without prejudice.

2. (Currently Amended)

~~The method of claim 1~~

A method for encoding integer data comprising:

providing a unique variable bit length binary representation of the absolute value of said integer data;

appending to said unique variable bit length binary representation a single bit representing the sign of said integer data;

wherein said single bit is zero for integer data that is less than or equal to zero.

3. (Currently Amended)

~~The method of claim 1~~

A method for encoding integer data comprising:

providing a unique variable bit length binary representation of the absolute value of said integer data;

appending to said unique variable bit length binary representation a single bit representing the sign of said integer data;

wherein said single bit is one for integer data that is less than or equal to zero.

4. (Currently Amended)

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~~The method of claim 1~~

A method for encoding integer data comprising:

providing a unique variable bit length binary representation of the absolute value of said integer data;

appending to said unique variable bit length binary representation a single bit representing the sign of said integer data;

wherein said single bit is zero for integer data that is greater than or equal to zero.

5. (Currently Amended)

~~The method of claim 1~~

A method for encoding integer data comprising:

providing a unique variable bit length binary representation of the absolute value of said integer data;

appending to said unique variable bit length binary representation a single bit representing the sign of said integer data;

wherein said single bit is one for integer data that is greater than or equal to zero.

6. (Cancelled) - Please Cancel Claim 6, without prejudice.

7. (Currently Amended)

~~The method of claim 6~~

A method for encoding integer data comprising:

providing a unique variable bit length binary representation of the absolute value of said integer data;

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appending to said unique variable bit length binary representation a single bit representing the sign of said integer data;

wherein said unique binary representation comprises a leading portion and a value portion;

further wherein said leading portion encodes the length of said value portion.

8. (Currently Amended)

~~The method of claim 6~~

A method for encoding integer data comprising:

providing a unique variable bit length binary representation of the absolute value of said integer data;

appending to said unique variable bit length binary representation a single bit representing the sign of said integer data;

wherein said unique binary representation comprises a leading portion and a value portion;

further wherein said leading portion comprises a number of identical bits equal to the number of bits in said value portion.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein said number of identical bits comprises bits having a value of zero.

10. (Currently Amended)

~~The method of claim 6~~

A method for encoding integer data comprising:

providing a unique variable bit length binary representation of the absolute value of said integer data;

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appending to said unique variable bit length binary representation a single bit representing the sign of said integer data;

wherein said unique binary representation comprises a leading portion and a value portion;

further wherein said value portion comprises the significant bits of said absolute value of said integer data written in a binary base system.

11. (Currently Amended)

~~The method of claim 6~~

A method for encoding integer data comprising:

providing a unique variable bit length binary representation of the absolute value of said integer data;

appending to said unique variable bit length binary representation a single bit representing the sign of said integer data;

wherein said unique binary representation comprises a leading portion and a value portion;

further wherein said leading portion precedes said value portion.

12. (Cancelled) - Please Cancel Claim 12, without prejudice.

13. (Currently Amended)

~~The method of claim 12~~

A method for encoding integer data comprising:

providing a unique variable bit length binary representation of the absolute value of said integer data;

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appending to said unique variable bit length binary representation a single bit representing the sign of said integer data;

wherein said integer data comprises data from a data set having a most probable value;

further wherein the occurrence of said most probable value is specified separately.

14. (Currently Amended)

~~The method of claim 12~~

A method for encoding integer data comprising:

providing a unique variable bit length binary representation of the absolute value of said integer data;

appending to said unique variable bit length binary representation a single bit representing the sign of said integer data;

wherein said integer data comprises data from a data set having a most probable value;

further wherein said data set comprises image data.

15. (Currently Amended)

~~The method of claim 1~~

A method for encoding integer data comprising:

providing a unique variable bit length binary representation of the absolute value of said integer data;

appending to said unique variable bit length binary representation a single bit representing the sign of said integer data wherein:

said integer data is denoted by "N" and has an absolute value binary representation "A" having "L" significant bits;

said unique variable bit length binary representation comprises L zeros followed

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by A.

16. (Cancelled) - Please Cancel Claim 16, without prejudice.

17. (Cancelled) - Please Cancel Claim 17, without prejudice.

18. (Cancelled) - Please Cancel Claim 18, without prejudice.

19. (Cancelled) - Please Cancel Claim 19, without prejudice.

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